

DDI-72-75

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : OPR Participation in the Annual Meeting of
the American Historical Association (AHA),
27-30 December 1974

1. Eight members of the Office of Political Research attended the above meeting in Chicago for the purposes of interviewing potential candidates for employment in OPR, attending sessions of substantive interest, and improving the Agency's connection with and reputation among academic scholars. The eight attendees were:



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2. Some weeks prior to the meeting, we had placed a notice of job opportunities in the Employment Information Bulletin published by the AHA. By 20 December we had received well over 100 letters in response and had scheduled appointments for most of those who had written. [redacted] handled the correspondence and scheduled the interviews in Chicago.

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3. Upon arrival in Chicago the afternoon of 27 December, we put notices of job opportunities in the Professional Job Register which the AHA runs at its annual meeting. The notices were scarcely up on the board when the telephone started ringing. We began interviewing Friday afternoon. By noon on Monday we had interviewed 185 persons; i.e., some seven percent of those attending the meeting. We judge that some two dozen of those we interviewed are good prospects, from whom we will request samples of analytical work and writing. We would then bring in for interview those who seem the most promising. (A certain number of those seeking interviews had their minds firmly focused on the 16th

or 17th Century; others appeared to be academic drones.) A number of those interviewed seemed to be good candidates for the CT Program and were encouraged to try this as an avenue for joining the Agency. This is an excellent time to be recruiting high-quality talent--as this and the APSA session in August showed; were slots and space available, DDI offices could add quite a number of first-rate people to their ranks.

4. The attitude we detected about us is best described as one of curiosity but not of hostility. We understood from people we interviewed that there was much talk about our presence--it was, after all, a first for these historians to have CIA conducting job interviews at their convention--but we had few opportunities to mix, generally being occupied with interviews. A few times we noticed that conversation ceased when we entered a crowded elevator. One of our number in self-defense joined a noisy cocktail party (Kansas State University) in his corridor; he was treated cordially and accepted as a fellow professional. Only one or two of those interviewed raised the question of domestic spying, and they did so more in sadness than in anger.

5. Many interviewees seemed quite ignorant of the workings of the foreign affairs community and government in general and of CIA in particular. One distraught young student caught [redacted] between interviews and asked him a series of questions about the Agency's relations with Congress, the oversight process, and why the Agency budget was hidden. He answered her directly, drawing on his experience in these matters. She couldn't cope with the idea that Members of Congress could know something about Agency operations and publicly deny such knowledge.

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6. Acting on a request from Professor Paul Johnson, of Roosevelt University, the Local Arrangement Chairman, to [redacted] Coordinator of Academic Relations, I agreed to talk on job opportunities for historians in the Federal Government with particular emphasis on opportunities in this Agency. This talk was well-advertised by placards in the corridor, but it drew no more people than the previous speaker who represented, I believe, the publishing industry. There was one heckler, supported by a clique of four or five, who made a loud statement against the Agency's involvement in such activity as [redacted]. He continued to interrupt my answers to other questions, but, I would say, a large majority of those attending were clearly there to learn about jobs and were not pleased at the interruption. There was no other incident even remotely unpleasant. By and large, the fire and militancy of the late 1960's have given way to disinterested attitudes; there seem to be few causes with fervent followers.

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7. A representative of The Washington Post ran into [redacted] in the corridors and said she was interested in writing something about the Agency's participation at the AHA meeting. [redacted] quite properly directed her to contact [redacted]. She never did so, and I understand that The Washington Post story about the Convention did not mention us.

8. We all found this an interesting and stimulating experience; we got a number of promising job applicants; and I think we advanced the Agency's reputation through talking, even if briefly, with over 200 people who follow history as a profession. They should now be more aware of the legitimate research and analysis functions of the Agency.

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Deputy Director, Political Research

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